

Swine Flu Hotline Answer Sheet

Hotline Answers/Swine Flu 5

Date: May 6, 2009

Time: 4 p.m. (*Italics indicates updated information.*)

Is there swine flu in Idaho?

Yes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has confirmed H1N1 (swine) flu infection in a Kootenai County woman, the first confirmed case of H1N1 (swine) flu in Idaho. The woman, who is in her 60s, became moderately ill after recently traveling to Texas. She was not hospitalized and is recovering.

An Ada County baby girl less than one year old tested probable for H1N1 infection; samples were sent to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention for confirmation. The infant was not hospitalized and is recovering at home.

Are there other cases being tested from north Idaho?

As of May 6, a total of 19 cases from the five northern counties had been tested at the state laboratory. Results of fourteen were negative; one was sent to the CDC and confirmed positive. Four are awaiting results at the state lab to see if more tests are necessary.

What are you doing to protect me from swine flu?

Public health officials from Panhandle District Health are working with the woman and her healthcare provider for continued care and have implemented strategies to reduce the chances of transmitting infection to other people. This includes the use of antivirals and voluntary home isolation. The woman is retired and reportedly had limited contacts with other people since she began suffering flu-like symptoms. *None of her contacts has developed symptoms.*

Panhandle Health District has epidemiologists or “disease detectives” who follow an established response plan in an outbreak. They:

- enlist the help of schools, governments, health care providers and others to keep track of flu activity;
- work with state and national health officials to identify, monitor and investigate flu samples;

- advise communities how to protect themselves and help prevent infection and spread of the virus.

Is this swine flu virus contagious?

Yes. It is contagious and spreads from person to person. However, it is not known yet how easily it spreads between people.

What are the signs and symptoms of swine flu in people?

The symptoms of swine flu in people are similar to seasonal flu:

- fever
- cough
- sore throat
- body aches
- headache
- chills
- fatigue

Some people have reported diarrhea and vomiting. Like the seasonal flu, swine flu may worsen chronic medical conditions.

Are there different signs and symptoms of flu for children?

Children under five years have increased risk of serious complications from the flu. Parents should call their healthcare provider if their child:

- *Develops any fever of more than 100.4 °F in the first 3 months of life, 101 °F or greater between 3 and 6 months, or 103 °F after 6 months of age.*
- *Has trouble breathing, appears to have ear or face pain, or looks very ill. Some children develop complications from the flu, such as pneumonia or ear or sinus infections.*
- *Has a cough that worsens or that lingers more than a week.*

How does swine flu spread?

The swine flu virus spreads through the air, mainly from person to person through coughing and sneezing. People may become infected by touching something with flu viruses on it and then touching their mouth, eyes or nose. You don't catch it from eating pork.

How can someone with the flu infect someone else?

Infected people may infect others beginning one day before symptoms develop and up to seven days after becoming sick. That means you may be able to pass on the flu to someone else before you know you are sick.

What should I do to keep from getting the flu?

- Wash your hands! Wash your hands after coughing or sneezing into them. Wash your hands after touching hard surfaces, like doorknobs or light switches, which someone with flu germs may have touched.
- Keep your distance from anyone who is sick. Three to six feet
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Try to stay in good general health—get plenty of sleep, stay physically active, manage your stress, drink plenty of fluids and eat nutritious food.
- If you do get sick, stay home and don't infect others.

What should I do if I'm concerned about a potential exposure?

- Monitor yourself for 7 days from the time of the exposure, for flu symptoms.
- Maintain a 3-6 foot distance from other people. Wash your hands often.
- If, within the 7 day period you do experience flu-like symptoms or a fever, stay home.
- Call your health care provider to discuss your concerns.

Where can I get a test to see if I have swine flu?

Call your doctor or health care provider. *Your healthcare provider will decide if you need a test based on your symptoms and other clinical factors.* Panhandle Health District has no doctors on staff and doesn't test. If you don't have a doctor, hospital labs test. So do After Hours and Immediate Care clinics and the Dirne Clinic. *Call first!*

Why does it take so long for the test results to come back?

Testing for H1N1 is a 3-Tier process.

Tier 1: Local testing with a Rapid Flu test.

Tier 2: Further interpretation by Idaho Bureau of Labs in Boise

Tier 3: Testing by CDC in Atlanta.

The CDC and the State set criteria for their level of testing.

Should I go to work if I am sick?

Sick people shouldn't work. *If you have been tested for H1N1 flu, you could be off of work for more than a week due to the 3-tier process.*